Today's News - Monday, June 1, 2015

- Lepeska takes an in-depth, thoughtful look at how "an eco-system of revival and reclamation has shimmered to life" in Beirut, where "urbanist campaigners have upped their game" with projects that are not merely restorations, "but a reckoning with the past."
- Olcayto minces no words about the RIAS Festival of Architecture: "events of this kind can only ever be, at best, well-meaning PR stunts. The profession will receive no PR boost at all - few will come away from it with greater respect for architects in Scotland."
- Kimmelman delves into the very pricey saga of Brooklyn's Bushwick Inlet Park, whose first five acres "already surpasses the High Line's cost to the taxpayer" and the landowner wants $500 million for the next, promised by the city, 13 acres. "Back here on planet Earth, the city will not, and should never, pay that kind of ransom."
- Townsend ties the details of the ongoing saga of London's Garden Bridge into a neat narrative: so, just how did an architect with one bridge under his belt beat out two firms known for many "prestigious" (and one Stirling Prize-winning) bridges?
- More luminaries "line up to lambast 'abysmal' garden bridge plan" (Self says, "It's crap.").
- Heathcote, meanwhile, has a long chat with Heatherwick about his plans for the Royal Academy and the Metropolitan Museum of Art: he "delivers serious, elegant new spaces that manage to combine respect for the historic fabric, a kind of high-minded modernity and a sense of generous, civic permanence."
- A look at the reinvention of airports: "travelers are spending longer in airports these days. And we expect more from them. Cue high-profile architects to design them" (led by Foster).
- Eyefuls of new images of Saudi Arabia's £67 billion, 70-square-mile King Abdullah Economic City - "no cost will be spared" (train station by Foster included).
- Eyefuls of new photos of Piano's Valletta City Gate, his once-controversial "expansive civic complex" in Malta (looks stunning to us!).
- Wainwright gives two thumbs-ups to The Foundry that "punches well above its weight in both architectural ingenuity and the social impact" - and just won London building of the year ("It's basically a series of concrete shelves that you can put stuff on," sayeth Architecture 00).
- Bevan parses "two remodeled buildings that are reinventing the workspace": Parry's "approach is as elegant and understated as Hywel Evans's offices are in-your-face. There's a fridge magnet quality of 'drink more caffeine and do dumb things faster' to some architecture."
- A (stunning) new courthouse in Australia "reflects the intersection of the justice system with Indigenous worldviews" - instead of "alienating Aboriginal people from their community and place."
- Nottingham's planning committee says it "had no choice" but to approve a "brutal" PFI school, even though it looks like "a barracks or something out of Dickens"; the school principal "declared it "lovely'" (we'll withhold comment).
- Welton, on a brighter note, cheers Berke's 21c Museum Hotel in Durham, NC: "It has perfect elements for rebirth - for the 'Brooklynization' of America," sayeth the architect (guess that's a good thing?).
- On a sadder note, the sun is about to set on a Tokyo "time capsule," the 1962 Hotel Okura: the "current renovation plans don't favor the wishes of the preservation crowd" - but at least they're being overseen by Taniguchi - son of the original architect (fab photos make us sad).
- Darley celebrates two women who "probably changed the physical landscape of Britain more than any other individuals": "The recent surge of interest in the role of 20th-century women in architecture has entirely leapfrogged landscape architecture" (until now).
- A legendary Turkish architectural firm's archive opens for visitors that "not only presents a detailed history of a long established firm, but also allows architects to analyze the field of architecture in Turkey from 1960s to 2000s."
- Call for entries: Expressions of Interest/EOI: Art Mill, Qatar International Design Competition (to be sited near Pei and Nouvel museums) + $10,000 Sylvia Harris Citizen Design Award + "Casablanca Bombing Rooms": design a public library on the site of the 2003 Casablanca bombings (great project, no-so-great name?!!?).

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Preserving a City Where 80% of the Past Has Been Erased: Beirut, the "Paris of the East," is done hiding its battle scars...an eco-system of revival and reclamation has shimmered to life...no mere restoration...but a reckoning with the past...sparing Beit Barakat from demolition in 1997...a tireless campaign to turn it into Beit Beirut, a war memorial and urban museum...$50 million plan...to restore more than a dozen parks...green agenda doesn't end with parks. By David Lepeska -- Mona el-Hallak; Youssef Haidar; Robert Saliba; Ghassan Maasri; Rem Koolhaas; Renzo Piano [images]- Next City (formerly Next American City)

If the Scottish Government is serious about architecture, some wrongs will need righting: It will take more than RIAS Festival of Architecture fun to boost public confidence...events of this kind can only ever be, at best, well-meaning PR stunts for architecture...The profession...will receive no PR boost at all...few will come away from it with greater respect for architects or the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland. By Rory Olcayto- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Price Tag on Brooklyn Inlet Park Reaches $225 Million, and That's Only the Beginning: The owner of land needed by the city as part of the promised deal for the park is seeking $500 million...$225 million...already surpasses the High Line's cost to the taxpayer...threatens to approach the amount paid for Hudson River Park...a textbook study in civic entropy and how public developments go awry...Back here on planet Earth, the city will not, and should never, pay that kind of ransom. By Michael Kimmelman- New York Times

How Joanna Lumley charmed 'dear Boris' to back her garden bridge dream: New details emerge of key role played by celebrity amid calls for transparency over 'back to front' selection of Thomas Heatherwick: TfL invited...Marks Barfield Architects, which has delivered a number of prestigious bridge projects...Wilkinson Eyre...designed more than 25 bridges...[and] Heatherwick Studio, which has designed just one bridge. By Mark Townsend- Observer (UK)

Authors, architects and artists line up to lambast 'abysmal' garden bridge plan: Critics are speaking out against the design and funding of Joanna Lumley's £175m scheme ahead of a judicial review: ...facing an escalating backlash..."It's crap." -- Thomas Heatherwick; John Tusa; Will Self; Grayson Perry; Iain Sinclair; Will Hurst; Zaha Hadid; Piers Gough- Observer (UK)

David Chipperfield's monumental visions: ...shares the inspirations behind his plans to expand the Royal Academy and the Metropolitan Museum of Art...[he] delivers serious, elegant new spaces that manage to combine respect for the historic fabric, a kind of high-minded modernity and a sense of generous, civic permanence..."they are both monuments that we are fond of. Which is both a strength and a weakness." By Edwin Heathcote- Financial Times (UK)

Reinvention of airports Norman Foster began in London and Hong Kong steps up: ...travellers are spending longer in airports these days. And we expect more from them...Cue high-profile architects to design them. -- Foster + Partners; Safdie Architects; Cristiano Ceccato/Zaha Hadid Architects/ADP Ingeniérie [images]- South China Morning Post

The city springing up in the desert: New pictures of Saudi Arabia's £67 billion project that will house two million people by 2035: King Abdullah Economic City...with oil supplies naturally dwindling...part of Saudi Arabia's efforts to 'diversify away from oil' and create jobs...15% of the 70 square mile city already constructed...no cost will be spared.- Daily Mail (UK)

Stone's Throwback: Renzo Piano Modernizes Ancient Material in Malta: The Valletta City Gate project is nearing completion...newly released photographs of the expansive civic complex...multiple juxtapositions that offer a modern aesthetic for Valetta's future while respecting this city's ancient urban fabric. [images]- Architizer

Shoe polish factory with a conscience wins London building of the year: A clever conversion of a factory in Vauxhall has created a beautifully crafted social working space – with room for budget meetings, bee-keeping, and everything in between: The Foundry...punches well above its weight in both architectural ingenuity and the social impact..."It's basically a series of

concrete shelves that you can put stuff on"... By Oliver Wainwright -- Lynton Pepper/Architecture 00 [images]- Guardian (UK)

Ramping up: how the new Alphabeta office building and 8 St James's Square are redefining the workplace: Fancy an office with a cycling track? How about some Picassos for the penthouse floor? Eric Parry's approach is as elegant and understated as Richard Hywel Evans's offices are in-your-face...There's a fridge magnet quality of "drink more caffeine and do dumb things faster" to some architecture. By Robert Bevan -- Studio RHE; Eric Parry [images]- Evening Standard (UK)

Kununurra Courthouse: Historically, courthouses have been a means of alienating Aboriginal people from their community and place. Designed jointly by TAG Architects and iredale pedersen hook, the new courthouse reflects the intersection of the justice system with Indigenous worldviews. By Elizabeth Grant and Thalia Anthony [images]- Australian Design Review

Planning committee 'had no choice' but to approve 'brutal' PFI school: Nottingham's planning committee criticised the design of Top Valley Academy...likening it to a barracks or something out of Dickens. But they gave it the green light because the school has been waiting for a rebuild since 2006...School principal...declared it "lovely." -- Ryder Architecture [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

With 21c Museum Hotel, Durham's on a Roll: ...home to one of the fastest-growing cultural scenes in the nation...new hotel...has taken over the 17-story Hill Building, built in 1935-37. It has a pedigree...Empire State Building's architects, Shreve, Lamb and Harmon..."It has perfect elements for rebirth - for the 'Brooklynization' of America." By J. Michael Welton -- Shreve, Lamb and Harmon; Deborah Berke Partners [images]- Huffington Post

Closing Time for the Hotel Okura, a '60s Tokyo Time Capsule: ...new design, overseen by...the son of the original architect...will preserve the blend of traditional Japanese art and modern design that served the original so well...economics, as the current renovation plans suggest, don't favor the wishes of the preservation crowd...while it's theoretically possible to retrofit the old building with earthquake-resistant technology, financially, it's totally impractical. -- Yoshiro Taniguchi/Hideo Kosaka (1962); Yoshio Taniguchi [images]- Curbed

Remembering an age when we cared about landscaping the nation's infrastructure: ...two women who influenced the shape of so much of our landscape: The recent surge of interest in the role of 20th-century women in architecture has left the engineering and environmental professions in the shadows and entirely leapfrogged landscape architecture...between them, Brenda Colvin and Sylvia Crowe...probably changed the physical landscape of Britain more than any other individuals. By Gillian Darley- BD/Building Design (UK)

Legendary architect's archive open for visitors: Altug and Behruz Çinici Archive not only presents a detailed history of a long established architectural firm, but also allows architects and other interested users to analyze the field of architecture in Turkey from 1960s to 2000s...currently being digitalized and cataloged at SALT Research...- Daily Sabah (Turkey)

Call for entries: Expressions of Interest/EOI: Art Mill, Qatar International Design Competition; new museum, circa 1 million square feet, to join Doha's ensemble of museums by I.M. Pei and Jean Nouvel; cash prizes; Stage One deadline: June 26- Malcolm Reading Consultants / Qatar Museums

Call for entries: Sylvia Harris Citizen Design Award: $10,000 toward the implementation of a strong project concept to ignite change in your community; open to practicing professionals from all design disciplines based in the U.S.; deadline: August 3- Design Ignites Change / AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Arts)

Call for entries: "Casablanca Bombing Rooms" architecture competition: a public library on the site of the 2003 Casablanca bombings; cash prizes; earlybird registration deadline (save money!): July 2 (submissions due September 30)- HMMD / Homemade Dessert

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